# 67

# tower

Archive
LD
3548
.T7
Spring
1967

~~Ala~~
~~R~~
~~378~~
~~A316~~
~~Spring 1967~~
~~c.2~~

LIBRARY
ALABAMA COLLEGE
MONTEVALLO

LIBRARY
ALABAMA COLLEGE
MONTEVALLO

# The Tower

Spring, 1967

*The Literary Magazine of Alabama College*


## ESSAY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Religious Poetry and the Twenty-Ninth Psalm | G. B. Henry | 9 |

## FICTION

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Last Stop Before Quitting Time | Randy Troup | 2 |
| The Consecration | Calvin Burton | 11 |

## POETRY

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| The Tree Swing (To Earth) | Jenny Holman | 4 |
| Sunset | margaret sarah hearn | 4 |
| A Spring Ballad | Charlie L. Culp | 4 |
| The Imprint of War | Sharon Henderson | 5 |
| I'll Hide the Faded Rainbow | Martha Faye McDonald | 6 |
| Dreams | James K. Mason | 6 |
| If I Had Loved You | G. B. Henry | 6 |
| I Want the Sun | Charlie L. Culp | 7 |
| i loved the village idiot | Martha Faye McDonald | 7 |
| After Supper | Robert Walters | 7 |
| Julia, Mother of Jamie | Jenny Holman | 8 |
| On Suicide | Jenny Holman | 10 |
| Ode to the Sole Survivor of New Year's Eve | Sam Johnson | 12 |
| Good Friday | margaret sarah hearn | 13 |
| The Rite | Sharon Henderson | 13 |
| Essence | Calvin Burton | 14 |
| To the Rose of Duty | G. B. Henry | 15 |
| Who Wants Hearts? | Charlie L. Culp | 15 |
| Old | G. B. Henry | 16 |
| This I Do, Loving You | Martha Faye McDonald | 16 |
| The Land Clearing | Ron Harris | 17 |
| Renascence | Jenny Holman | 18 |
| Elizabeth | Calvin Burton | 19 |
| No, No, Janie-poo | Martha Faye McDonald | 19 |
| Spirit | Woodie Stevens | 20 |



| | |
|---|---|
| EDITOR | G. B. Henry |
| ASSOCIATE EDITOR | Tom Hubert |
| EDITORIAL STAFF | Carol Weir, Sharon Henderson, Jenny Holman |
| ART | Stanley Hamby, Beverly Sims |
| COVER DESIGN | Don Hughes |
| TYPISTS | Peggy Gaskin, Delores Foley |


103490

# LAST STOP BEFORE QUITTING TIME

**By Randy Troup**

I was very anxious as I pulled up into the short drive way. It was chert and in some ruts there were ashes that made the drive dirty, and there was a slushy puddle up near the house with a cardboard box flattened out half in it and half on the frozen ground. On the ground below the eaves of the right side of the house, just past the puddle on the end of the drive way, was still a little shrinking bank of dirty snow. The edge of the drive cut up against an overgrown field. Dull brown goldenrod stalks tipped with grey, soggy fuzz grew up around the pile of tin cans and other trash that the Arland Howells (they pronounced it "Howls") had thrown over the property line.

The house was covered with black tar paper but the lean-to front porch had been built-in on the right side with clapboards that were covered with one coat of white paint; supposedly the rest of the house should be finished this way, but of course it would never be done. The left side of the porch was open and an old broken and greasy stuffed chair sat in front of the pair of windows which had unpainted frames and sills. Some brown paper sacks with something in them were piled in the chair and beside it on the floor were piles of rusty tools, and an old carburetor was sitting in the middle of an old tire. A couple of plastic Chlorox bottles with the tops cut off were hanging from the eaves of the porch; faded plastic flowers were stuck into the dirt.

I stood before the door. I had combed my hair after parking the car but the ends stuck out in a wave over each ear. I had waited too long about getting a haircut, but I hoped that maybe it would make me look less different when I had to face these people.

As I had passed all the other shacks and had wound around the hill along all of the dumping places and tried to miss all of the holes and sometimes found the road's edge crumbled away, I felt more sick in no specific way and I wanted to lie down and forget trying to live. But I was obliged to see the people and carry out my job. I felt like no one, but I felt very really sick.

The woman who came to the door was mannish looking in her blue jeans and a faded flannel shirt. She was not fat, her hair was moderately long and frizzled out all around, and she was slightly over five feet tall.

She just looked at me and I said, almost stumbling at first and then speaking very loudly, "I—uh—'ve come to see Mr. Howell about some business."

"You come 'bout bills?—well he idn't here. 'Ve you come to see about us payin' you?"

I stepped in, said that, well, I did want to see Mr. Howell if I could; I did need to see about clearing up some matters.

I now noticed that this built-on room was very cold, that it was finished with some cheap kind of composition panels inside, with strips of tape over the seams. There was a metal cot in the inside corner and there some clothes hung on a pipe with a flimsy old piece of drapery or something hanging in front. There was a cheap portable type television set on a painted fruit crate and an old metal table had old faded photographs in cardboard frames on it. There were no windows in this room.

"What is it?" Arland Howell said, coming in from some back room.

"Nothin', and you better go, Mister," was Mrs. Howell's low nervous reply. "Ar an' I didn't know you were here."

Howell was apparently drunk, but he didn't seem particularly hostile; in fact, he appeared to be in a very talkative and friendly mood.

Howell laughed and said, "Well, if you want money, we hadn't got any. Sit down back here. How ya doin'?"

Howell led me into the next room which had once been the front room and which had a fire in a heater. Howell said, "Sit down, sit down," and as he pressed me by the shoulder down onto a dirty couch I noticed a big, expensive looking doll in an old wooden straight chair by the window. It had curly hair that stuck out like the dull woman's but was shiny and red-brown; it had a fancy dress that was incredibly dirty.

I was telling myself that I would have to be much firmer and tell Howell that I had come for—and meant—business. I would tell him he would have to settle up or the company would be forced to get its money through legal means. But, as I sat in the dingy room with these people and Howell's rotten teeth and the alcohol, along with the burning smell of the coal, stifling me, I knew that I would never manage to be anything. I would always be below anyone I tried to do business with. I was doomed always to be led; I would get a living some other way or maybe die. But it wouldn't be much different.

Howell was saying to me, laughing, and as though I was a little boy, that did I think I was going to settle up? "They sendin' you now, huh?"

The coal was in my eyes and I was hotter and sicker than ever. Howell went on talking some foolishness. And in a little while: "Sue Mary, get in here and show 'im the doll."

Bashfully, the girl came in (she was about eight years old) and didn't say anything. She picked the doll up roughly—frowning at her father—and stood the doll up and in some tinny little voice the toy spouted out some foolishness that these people would never comprehend—sweet little bourgeois foolishness. The girl started to put the doll back but Howell took it and the girl kicked him on the ankle and ran out.

Howell cursed and threw the doll down and would have started after

Sue Mary and slapped her but he was too lazy. The doll was lying on the floor with the childish recording going over and over. Howell said that the groc'ry from town gave away that specially to Acie at the drawin' but the girl kept it mostly.

"Those people got money to throw away like that. Your company don't need mine." Howell said that he was just walked on and that he wadn't gonna let 'em do it. I was so hot that I couldn't stand it but I wasn't going to move with Howell sitting next to me. I heard a wild laugh from in the back that sounded like a fit of pain and the boy, Acie, came laughing wildly and practically running on his knees—after the doll.

Acie's legs were drawn, he was drooling at the mouth, and he grabbed the doll in his drawn up hands. Sue Mary was right behind him; the spastic boy was about two or four years older than her—it was hard to tell his age—he was clutching the doll with violent strength. She waited until he had managed to pick up the doll and then she screamed "Quit! Quit" And she began slapping the boy on the back of the head.

Howell hollared for Acie to stop it and he grabbed the boy and took him back to his room—the girl had snatched the doll and run into the front room and turned on the television full volume and then slammed the old front door between the rooms.

Howell came back and said the boy was trouble enough, having to feed him and see after and still have to worry about him and love him. "An' you out here wantin' my money —you oughta help me."

I got up and Howell said hey! where was I going. I almost sat back down. But I had nerve enough to stand and say that "Mr. Howell, I believe that I have made clear the position of the people I represent. You will have to try to make some arrangements to settle your accounts, or we will have to do so ourselves."

I said that personally speaking, though, I was sorry—I really said it with contempt—and Howell laughed: "We'll pull it on them, won't we boy."

I said goodbye. And the man let me walk out through the front room by myself. The girl was sitting right in front of the television and she grabbed the doll and looked at me with true hate. I opened the door and the cold hit me. It was nearly dark—the sky was a glowing pearl-grey. There might be snow. It was beginning to freeze. I drove off in my old car as the Howell's television set blared out the commercial for the national news program—". . . get fast, fast, fast relief from pain."

*—Randy Troup*

## THE TREE-SWING

### (To Earth)

Often in a darkened memory I can see
again a little swing suspended from a tree,
many years removed, its fraying
rope with slipping fingers playing
on the bough . . .
And like an anxious bride,
even now
I can feel the wee surprises of that
splinter-bed
and (thinking upward) witness
overhead
the sky's lace,
or (bending down) the yellow rivulets
across your face
are blurred and with my swaying
melt away.
Then soon my mind, enchanted
by the clay,
goes for a swim in the sameness of
your dusty ground a-sleeping,
or here or there a muddy remnant of
Your April weeping.

*—Jenny Holman*

## SUNSET

Rose warm, the love-stained Day, seeking
A place to hide her nakedness,
Curls into the hollow of bare hills.
The Evening Star from her maidenhead mooring
Watches with disapproving coldness
As the Day's bright color pales and dies
Within bare hills as wanton as thighs.

*—margaret sarah hearn*

## A SPRING BALLAD

On a certain semi-green St. Patrick's Day
Her yellow hair swung blurring arcs
From a blue sky to baggy blue jeans
Across a definitely giggling countenance.

O there was a lilting rhythm in the way
She threw her thighs beside the stream
To celebrate the departing teens
And seize the day by the neck if necessary.

And in that exploitation of time and space
Her proselyte soul was freed to dream
Of yin and yang on a pine-straw bed
Through fragments of a lyric tune heard long ago.

*—Charles L. Culp*

## THE IMPRINT OF WAR

(Apple Orchard, Suffolk, England—1961
Near An Obsolete Bomb Shelter)

Time edged its way around
The raw slab that sheltered
Memories, imaginations, and apples.
We could not ignore it;
Could not casually insist
That it did not exist
While its grey-white reflected mornings
And moon-white it caught the night.

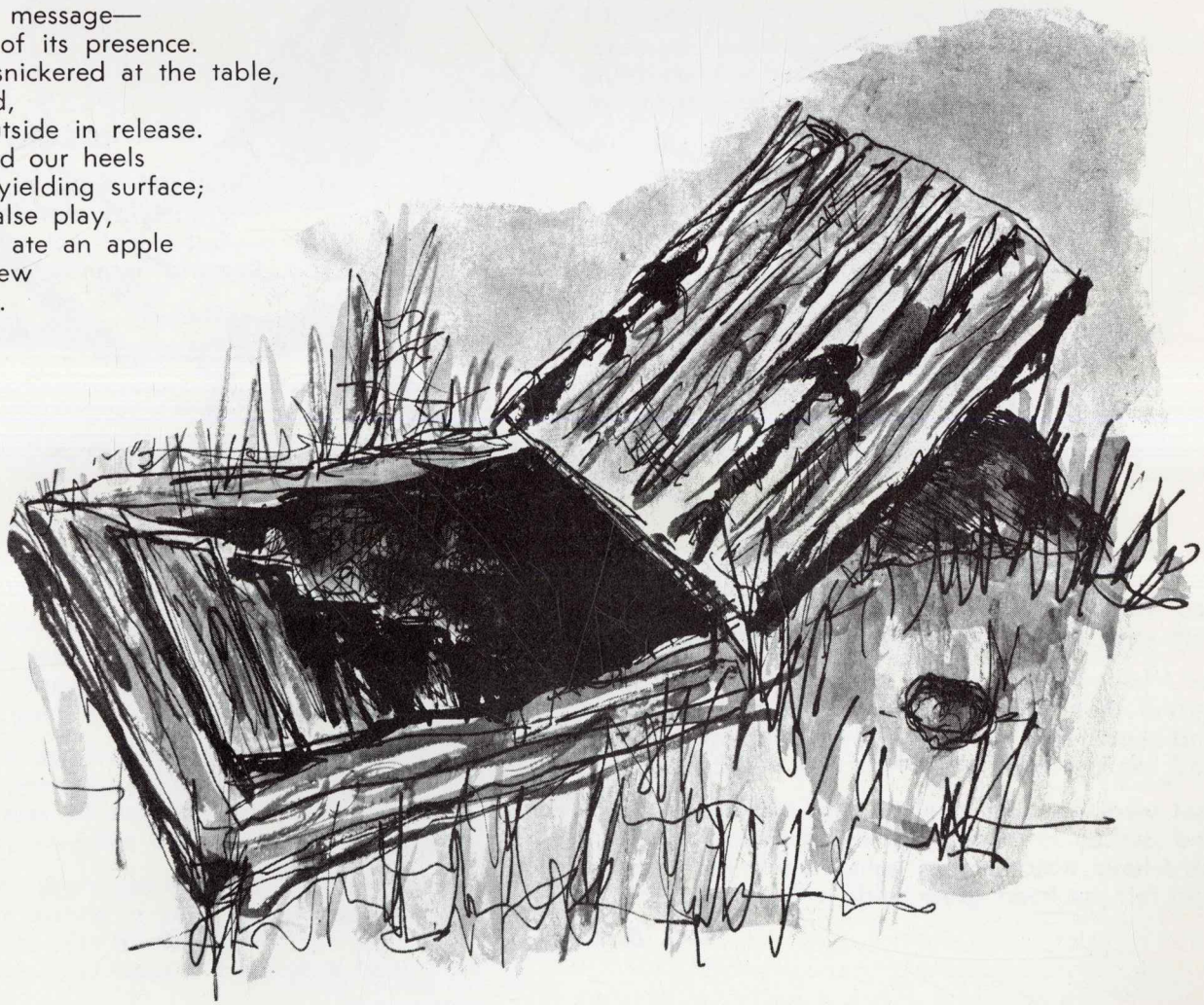
We had heard its history;
Knew the screaming fear
That had crouched beneath it
Down the crumbling wooden steps
Where now the apples rotted
Along rude shelves.

Listening, we refused to hear
The repeated message—
The proverb of its presence.
Instead, we snickered at the table,
Were excused,
And went outside in release.
Brashly clicked our heels
Across its unyielding surface;
Shouted in false play,
Then sat and ate an apple
In insolent view
Of the tutors.

The old ones stared,
And with conflicting smiles
Excused our youthful heresy.
Excused, but felt impelled
To instruct us in sobriety.

We played on it together;
Sometimes spread a picnic there
Or stomach-down stretched long
Across it slightly slanting
And considered what it was—
Or deliberately did not consider
It at all.

*—Sharon Henderson*



I'll hide the faded rainbow
  Behind a solemn rock
That you will never look on
  And shudder from the shock.

There will be dust to cover
  The sallow mockery
And dew to help it rot, then,
  Into obscurity.

There, hidden, will it vanish;
  And you need never know
That what you thought so vivid
  Could ever lose its glow.

So what if I'm a liar?—
  I'm sure it will suffice
That one of us loves rainbows
  And one of us is nice.

*—Martha Faye McDonald*

**DREAMS**

Horizontal views of the vertical
  Probability not improbability
  Fulfillment not repression
Personal insanity of the sane.

*—James K. Mason*

If I had loved you as those others had,
For eyes that sparkled like the dew gone mad,
You would be less a heartache to me now,
With eyes grown hollow as forsaken vows.

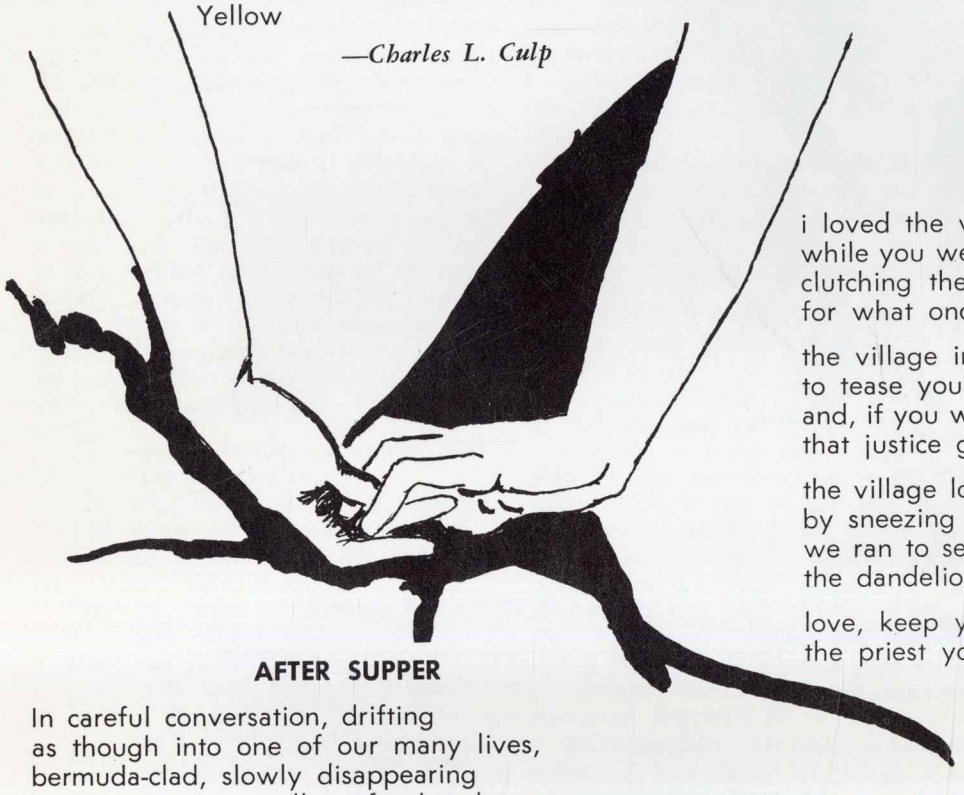
But I have loved you for the light I saw
Behind those eyes, outdance them twice apace;
And those eyes have lost all dancing grace,
And see but blindly as their day withdraws

That were no grief at all if light still shone,
And danced to mockery of dying sight.
But I have watched that light, how it has flown,
And felt my heart grow cold, with your heart's night.

*—G. B. Henry*

I want the sun
to come through my window
in the morning and paint my floor
Yellow
And a sky-blue sky
to sit on the ledge
and leer
And a mezzopiano surf
to float
through the kitchen window
And I want you
to let your yellow hair
hang down in the eggs yes
and smile my whole day
Yellow

*—Charles L. Culp*



i loved the village idiot last night
while you were stone hard in your bed, one hand
clutching the bastille post—a solemn stand
for what once shielded me from garish light.

the village innocent gave me his kite
to tease your see-saw god in Ever-Land;
and, if you weren't flaked out, we would demand
that justice give us one fast wind for flight.

the village lost its fool and you lost me
by sneezing when we begged for help. Alone,
we ran to see just where the wind had blown
the dandelion you flung so sensibly.

love, keep your gray eyes closed. i'll never tell
the priest you honored me so well, too well.

*—Martha Faye McDonald*

**AFTER SUPPER**

In careful conversation, drifting
as though into one of our many lives,
bermuda-clad, slowly disappearing
into a sometimes valley of a bourbon sun,

We speak of tomorrow's movie, or mock
our professors; and you are such a candid
child, and I, a brave cossack-dancer or
slender hero! guiding you in a drowsy wind.

The rhythm of our laughter is broken
by my hand upon your domestic breast;
and we converse of common things
as in different thoughts that range far, far away.

I know, in you there yawns a touching dream
to make me a mantle in your winter house,
and in me there stirs a wild desire
to catch the sun and hang it from your hair!

*—Robert Walters*

**JULIA, MOTHER OF JAMIE**

Small boy he was, and even small seemed—
One life among these dead folk—and was deemed
A stranger here among the rest of us.
He held us all in wonder, being thus
Alive. My God! Did that life spring from me?
A bit of green leaf on a wooden tree—
My son . . . My son! The birth I gave him pained
Me less than that he gave me: I regained
In loving him that vitalness that fades
With too much living. But I saw the shades
Of what was coming as I watched him grow
And learn, and felt a sudden chill to know
That he would soon be one of us, and I
Must help turn him to wood—or see him die,
So doomed to slay the spirit against my will,
I chose to kill the body first, and still
I say that I consider that guilt less—
Yet other mothers call me murderess.

*—Jenny Holman*

# RELIGIOUS POETRY AND THE TWENTY-NINTH PSALM

By G. B. Henry

"Why . . .," T. S. Eliot was once moved to ask, "is most religious verse so bad; and why does so little religious verse reach the highest level of poetry?"[1] His own answer, that most religious writers write what they want to feel rather than what they actually do feel,[2] is probably as close to the truth as one needs to come. In any case, however, the absence of the overblown phrases of magnificence and optimism, which would naturally follow this line of thinking, is a mark of most good religious poetry, including Eliot's own. The presence of actual rather than desired feeling is also evident in the best of Hebrew poetry, especially the Psalms. Probably the most obvious example of their religious veracity is contained in such laments as the following from the seventy-ninth psalm.

Oh God the heathen are come into thine inheritence;
Thy holy temple have they defiled;
They have laid Jerusalem on heaps.
The dead bodies of thy servants have they given to be meat
Unto the fowls of the heaven,
The flesh of thy saints
Unto the beasts of the earth.

How long, Lord? wilt thou be angry forever?
Shall thy jealousy burn like fire?
(Psalms 79:1-2, 5)

This is not to say, however, that good religious poetry is only that which is pessimistic or complaining. There are moments in the religious (and therefore in the Christian) experience, when an extreme sense of elation is achieved from the perception of the perpetual imminence of the divine in all temporal things—war, peace, love, even in nature itself. Whether or not this imminence actually exists is of little significance to the poetry itself; what is important is the fact that the best poems of this sort reveal not the truth of what they assert, but what it *feels* like to believe that such an assertion is true.[3] Excellent examples of this sort of poetry are to be found in the works of Hopkins, and in Dante, as well as in Hebrew literature. Especially illustrative of this in Hebrew literature is the twenty-ninth psalm.

This poem is ultimately, as are many other psalms, a nature hymn in praise of God, but the approach is very different from that of most religious verse. There are none of the conscious attempts at grandeur which one finds in such poems as the following.

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their Great Original Proclaim.[4]

Simplicity and indirectness are favored over such profuse employment of superlative adjectives. The most easily noticeable evidence of this technique is the fact that not once in the entire psalm is there any direct statement of how excellent God is for anything. This is not to say that there is no praise in the poem, but simply that it is conveyed in a more subtle manner than direct utterance. The praise accorded God in this psalm is given in a very simple and unemotional manner, and by this very method is made more profound and elevated.

The purpose of the poem is actually two-fold: the author wishes to show the "mighty" that in relation to God's power theirs is nothing and at the same time to praise God. These two purposes augment each other, with the final result being that the evidence used to convince the mighty of God's magnificence magnifies his praise far beyond the power of direct statements of greatness. The poem begins with a simple statement: the mighty should worship God.

Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty,
Give unto the Lord, glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name;
Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.
(Psalms 29:1-2)

Having said that the poet moves, without transition, into a sort of ode on the voice of God.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
The God of glory thundereth:
The Lord is upon many waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful!
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;
Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
He maketh them also to skip like a calf;
Lebanon and Sirion like a young unicorn.
The voice of the Lord divideth the flames of fire.
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness;
The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve
And discovereth the forests:
And in his temple doth everyone speak of his glory.
(Psalms 29:3-9)

What the poet has accomplished here, actually, is the singing of a hymn of praise to God without actually praising the person of God at all. He simply unfolds the majesty and beauty of several objects and events in nature and indicates that a facet of God is responsible for their occurrence. Thus God enjoys the praise of the psalmist vicariously through association with the objects spoken of in the poem. This method is quite sophisticated, and at best is difficult to explain; it is very similar to that employed by John Crow Ransom, when in "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter," he has the geese, rather than the speaker of the poem cry for the child's death. In this way the direct element of the sadness connected with the girl's death is removed from the immediate vicinity of emotion, yet the feeling is still coupled (indirectly) to the event itself, and is even more profoundly felt by the contrast of the juxtaposition of a very personal emotion onto an impersonal object. One might, for lack of a better term, call this technique vicarious metonymy; that is to say it is a method whereby the author has an action performed by, or an emotion or thought allied to one object, with the results of that action, emotion or thought accruing, by association, to some other object or

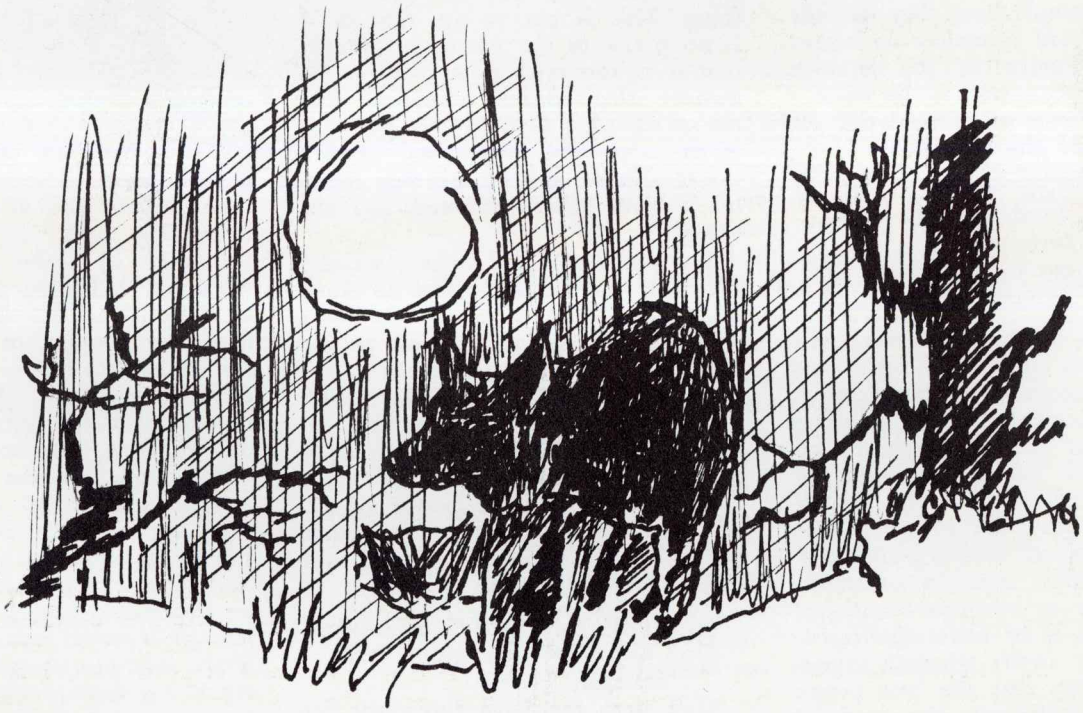
*(Continued on Page 20)*

# ON SUICIDE

I would that I, unmuffled by this crowd,
could rise upon hind legs and bay the moon,
and from her silver weave for me a shroud
to wave upon the silent air and hear them
whispering "too soon."

But then again, I want to wear the coat
of silence that dog wears, who, lurking there,
the music of the hunt within his throat
unmoved, trembles with every scent the dark
earth flings upon the air.

*—Jenny Holman*



# THE CONSECRATION

By Calvin Burton

The moon hung full like a great eye in the cloudy skies. Travis stared at it for a moment before closing the trunk of his car. He turned and spoke to a Negro man standing in the shadow of an old oak tree.

"Well Crip, I guess that'll ride all right. Here's $150 now, and I'll give you the rest Sunday when I pick up the other load."

"Thank you suh, Mr. Travis, I'll shore have it ready for you. You take and be careful wid yourself an' keep a good watch for the law. It looks like it might rain tonight, but dey'll likely be watchin' anyhow. Boot done told me that he heard 'um said that dey wuz goin' to stop all the 'Joe Louis' that wuz comin' out of Forkland. Dey might be on the main road like I seed 'um the other day so I 'spect you better take the river road 'til you gits to the Crossin' an' dat'll keep you off the pike fur a piece."

Travis nodded and got into the car. He drove away down the winding drive that trailed through the brown cotton fields and past the lonely corn stalks. The night was cold for September, but he did not raise the car window through which came the pure smell of the dry earth and dying leaves.

Travis felt good as he turned down the graveled road at the foot of the drive. He could see the opening in the trees at his left where the big river cut its way through the rich black land.

The blood in his veins flowed fast as he caught the glimpse of eyes in the headlights of his car. He slowed and watched the deer as it turned and stepped back into the edge of the field. It was a young buck with its antlers still in velvet. As he passed, he could see it watching him.

The road came close to the river now, and Travis saw the limestone bluffs shining gray in the clouded

moonlit sky. The big river ran smooth and free now, smooth and free as it had run when the road on which Travis drove was nothing but a trail, and when its half-naked sons had stood and looked across its wide breadth. The same spirit which had spoken aloud to them in that time whispered softly now to Travis of the same gifts of strength and courage and of freedom and peace.

Travis drove on through the night thinking about his life and his work. He loved the whiskey business. It was a simple business and a good one—one that gave a man a chance to know himself and to depend on himself. It pitted him against society and the fallible judgments of men, but above all it made him free from that society—not only free from it, but outcast by it—outcast not because that society resented "moonshine" whiskey, but because it resented the "moonshiner's" way of life, a way of life that taught a man pride and self-respect, but it also made him humble —humble not to men, but humble to another. It made him humble because he knew that without that Other he could not win: that he and his kind could not prevail against the odds—against the iron laws and rigid morals of that respectable society.

Travis turned from the gravel road onto the pavement. He increased his speed some and watched the lights of Eutaw approaching. When he reached the outskirts of town, he took a road that by-passed the main part. He drove carefully until he came to the big highway which would cross the river and lead to his destination.

As he turned off to the highway he felt his pulse rise to a faster pace. He would soon be nearing the flats that crossed the river bottom. Once on these flats there would be no turning back, because there was nothing on each side of the road but swamps.

As he reached the top of the hill that overlooked the river valley, he slowed for a moment. Out before him lay the big river and the swamps. He could see the tall cypress trees standing lonely under the cloudy mist of the moon. Thoughts of his boyhood days crossed before him. He remembered the evenings he and his father had spent fishing for white perch and bass in the big slough by the river or shooting ducks in the creek that fed into the slough, but those days were a long time past now. The slough had been turned into a recreation park where people came to drink beer and ski during the summer, and teenagers came to park during the colder months.

Travis was on the flats now and his every sense was at its highest key. The car rumbled along with the speedometer showing fifty. Just as the car passed the road that led into the recreation area, a flash of light appeared. Travis looked quickly and saw the red light on top of the car. He threw his car into third and pushed hard on the accelerator. The powerful engine screamed and the car lurched forward. The needle on the speedometer reached a hundred and Travis shifted into fourth gear. He could see the guidelights on the big bridge two miles away. The car behind was not gaining yet. Travis' eyes glanced across his instrument panel. The oil, temperature, and generator were all right. The speedometer needle was out of sight now but the car had still not reached its maximum speed. Travis glanced once again into the mirror; The red light seemed farther behind now. Travis felt better; he was sure that he could outrun the car and once he crossed the bridge, there would be many side roads which he could take.

The bridge was very near, the huge braces arched high overhead. Below the mighty river flowed smoothly. Travis felt the car bounce slightly as it came onto the bridge. He watched the cement posts flashing by on either side. Suddenly two eyes shone at the top of the bridge. The deer stood frozen as the lights struck him full in its face. Travis turned sharply, and quickly tried to regain control, but the inside tire bit deeply into the pavement and the car skidded and crashed through the railings.

Night closed black and the water rushed through the open window and mingled with the blood and the spirit whispered once more of strength and courage and of freedom and peace and the other spirit answered it and came to it and became part of it and of all the other spirits of the red man and the white and of the deer and the earth and He in all His eminence shuddered and the tears clouded the moon and the rains came and ran across the black lands and rushed into the creeks and they in turn into the river and the water and the blood and the spirits mingled together and became One.

*—Calvin Burton*

## ODE TO THE SOLE SURVIVOR OF NEW YEAR'S EVE

Hail, thou motley shrouded scoundrel, resting on the cluttered rack;
I read thy christening but dimly, half hid behind a face of wax.
Migrant from far distant shore, vintage brotherhood's old cheer;
Sent by thine artistic master, to the thirsty toiling here.
Servant stout of many uses, hold thy silken candle high;
Extending mood, pervading night, though sore abuse may dim thy light,
Thy soul is salve when life is dry.

*—Sam Johnston*

## GOOD FRIDAY

Today the bells startled the sky
As their great tongues shocked
The solemn dignity of Death.

A bold soul, born but to die,
Ran thirty-three steps and mocked
the emptiness of death.

*—margaret sarah hearn*

## THE RITE

Pale roses wreathed round death
Clouding well-polished brass handles.
Careful, there's some sad brown;
Rearrange it here—and there.
Shroud mortality in multi-color
And a ribbon glittering "From Friends."
Stung watchers clutch their drab palls
And veil fearfilled eyes in hypocritic black.

*—Sharon Henderson*

**ESSENCE**

a thousand yesterdays crawl painfully across a
thousand darknesses into a thousand tomorrows
and i am and each one is the same as it was before
and they are all alike because they are nothing
but yesterdays and tomorrows and she is and in
one moment not part of the yesterdays or the
tomorrows or them but just a piece of time
not measured by length or width or height or depth
He took us and put us there and you could see
everything and we was a big river and a tree and
a handful of dirt and a cold star way off up there
next to him and for that piece of time and in
that place we are and for once in our full existence
WE was alive and we knew everything that He intended
for man to know and He kept a part of us there
which was cast away from them not by them but by
Him because he knowed that we wasn't a part of
them but that we was from another time juxtaposed
with them in this time and He kept that part and
I AM

*—Calvin Burton*

## TO THE ROSE OF DUTY

Go moon-worn word,
As insufficient as a withered leaf
To capture half her glory or reveal my grief,
Tell her that wastes no time on lovers' sighs,
But moves to duty's whim with sad goodbyes,
How swift the moon will in her graces run,
And waste them, as the night consumes the sun.

Tell her who gives
Such magic to an hour,
Seeking naught else than that in all she lives,
That those with no enchantment of their own
Evoke no spells from any orphic flower,
But rend kind charms to old embittered bones.

Tell her how cold
Hard duty is
With those as fresh as summer thoughts—
Leaving them as the rising winter moon
Abandons shattered trees in jagged runes
To show how dear their winsome green was bought.

Tell her that sings
Of charges and of laws
That they will pound her heart to vacant dust;
And time will spare her no more for her cause
Than lovely roses, gossamer, or gauze.

*—G. B. Henry*

Who wants hearts?
Hearts are for pumping
    blood
    and I have one of my own
Thank You.

Give me words, looks,
    embraces, music,
    kisses and dreams
And I shall return them
    equally.

Give me you and take me
    and keep your damned tears
    and your Heart.

One is enough.

*—Charles L. Culp*

## OLD

The sun set in dulcet, in the ragged trees,
The moon sprang up
And waited in the east,
And murmured, with a lustre in the grass,
How well she knew
The sun would pass.

The sun fell down and struggled in the trees,
Like some lush beauty—
Skirt above her knees—
Reluctant to an old man's
Aging lusts,
Which shudder yet
Though mellowing to dust.

The sunset disappeared and left the trees
To wail their desperate anger
To the moon,
And then grow quiet
And hold that pale light too.

And all the while the wind ran through,
And sang a canon in the trees,
And whistled in the grass,
And rattled leaves,
As if accompanying
A deeper wrong.

And I have known of women—old and young;
And wailed and lusted
With the moon and sun;
And what does it matter now
For right or wrong?
We've made us many a sweet
And many a mournful song.

*—G. B. Henry*

This I do, loving you:
Construct a wall around me,
Hide in a tower of lies, and all the while
Fear kissing my eyelids.

Thronged fence and a self-made rail,
  Barricades and iron padlocks,—
Maybe with this I will not fail!—
  Hinged doors and a hoard of rocks . . .

And all the while
Fear kissing my eyelids.

*—Martha Faye McDonald*

## THE LAND CLEARING

The charred ruins bend over each other as
If to hide from the bleakness they share
With every empty pasture. Spring, four or
Five years ago they held wild grapes
And we tore down vine after vine to
Get the seasonal surprises. No more
Children will risk the falling stick and
Maddening shakes we once enjoyed.
The vines are in memories now.
But the aching arches are not hidden
By progress of the land clearing.
The machines tore up the roots, tree and
Vine, the fires blackened the rough
Bark and hungrily ate away the green
Mountains. Now, only the black huddle
Is seen from the house. The pond
Water is beginning to reach the dead
Trees as if there is some hope . . .
It will hide the trees and fish will
Parade under the arches, but we will
Look over the new pond and remember.

*—Ron Harris*

**RENASCENCE**

A man, they say, when near
freezing, feels warm
inside; a peace
envelopes him; his fear
recedes. Some charm
makes his decease
a welcome eminence—
the end seems kind
to his frost-bitten sense
and mildewed mind.

And it is strange that when
he has been saved
and knows a fire's
relief—and only then—
he shivers, laved
in heat, desires
comfort as thawing flesh
begins to creep,
then looks around afresh,
and starts to weep.

*—Jenny Holman*

**ELIZABETH**

"My its hot, hot even for June," said the
Stranger.
"Why are you smiling?"
And I answered, "because of Betsy."
"Oh, who is Betsy?" he asked.
"I don't think I can tell you who Betsy is
Because you see you are only a person
And you wouldn't know Betsy."
"Is Betsy a girl?" he asked.
"Oh yes . . . yes, when I'm with her she is a girl."
"What do you mean? She is a girl when you
Are with her? What is she when you are
Not with her?"
"Oh, she's . . . she's a tree. That's what she is,
An old tree standing alone on a big River
In a dying sun's gentle light, and she's more
Than a tree too, sometimes she's the sun
Itself when it gets up early in the
Morning and runs its rays over green
Pastures full of new clover and brown
Baby calves and sometimes she's an old
Corn field on a gray winter morning
With silent forms moving through
The bent stalks, and sometimes
She is just silence, that silence
That comes just before dawn when
Everything else is still sleeping."
And he asked almost in a whisper,
"Do you love her?"
"Oh yes!" "Yes I love her. Don't you
Love . . . but no . . . no you are—
You are only a person and . . . Oh! I
Must go outside now. Its starting
To rain. Imagine rain on Christmas Morning."

*—Calvin Burton*

No, no, Janey-poo!
leave the dirtyoldman alone,
quit polishing his shoes,
don't wipe his nose again.
there isn't time
to wash his handkerchief
or mend his socks.
his hair will have to stay undone.

Perhaps, Janey-poo,
there will be time to give his hand
one brief insurance kiss
before the secret wall
is shoved between
the man and you the child
who tripped into
the arms of someone done in pastel.

*—Martha Faye McDonald*

## RELIGIOUS POETRY

*(Continued from Page 9)*

idea. This is exactly what the poet of the twenty-ninth psalm does. By praising objects in which he shows the presence of the divine to be manifest, he causes the light of acclaim to shine obliquely on his subject rather than casting it directly, and in this way avoids, perhaps, some glaring emotionalism.

The effect of the poem is not fully achieved simply by a connection of random phenomena in nature to God, but by a careful choosing of objects and actions to direct the imagination of the reader to those aspects of the experience which are most important to the author's purpose. Since one purpose of the poem is to demonstrate to the mighty that they should worship God, most of the nature images in the ode to God's voice are those in which might is patent: "cedars," "forests," "floods," and "flames of fire." As well as these images of might there is "the voice of the Lord," which is "powerful" and "full of majesty," breaking and shaking and dividing and thundering as it does. In addition to all this there is another factor of the action involved which is even more humbling to the mighty; that is the ability of the voice of God to transform might into gentleness.

> He maketh them [the cedars] also
> to skip like a calf;
> Lebanon and Sirion like a young
> unicorn.
> (Psalms 29:6)

And he sits on the flood, which may or may not attest to its tameness, but if not it certainly illustrates the power of God again. Finally the voice of the Lord has the power of giving life as well as "breaking" it,

> The voice of the Lord maketh
> the hinds to calve
> And discovereth the forests:
> (Psalms 29:9)

the most powerful idea of all to convince the strong that they should praise God.

In addition to being supported by its actions and images, the central idea of the poem is complemented by the structure. The parallel thought pattern which is the basis of Hebrew verse is used to fine advantage in this psalm. There are many types of parallelism in Hebrew poetry, but the most prevalent and the most important in this psalm are stairlike and antithetical. By using stairlike parallelism the author augments the feeling of a unadorned piling up of natural facts, and at the same time keeps "the voice of the Lord," rather than God himself constantly before the feader's mind. This also serves as a unifying element, in a poem in which there is little transitional material between the various sections. One other functional parallelism is in actuality a combination of the antithetical and the stairlike. There are three places in the poem where antithetical elements appear: between verses five and six, verse eight and the first two elements of verse nine, and between the two elements of the last verse. These elements serve not only as a break in the monotony of the repetition, which is necessarily a part of the stairlike structure, but also reveal another facet of God's power, the ability to contain and resolve contradictions. The first two antithetical elements not only show this, but also foreshadow the final reversal of thought (verse eleven), which is in contrast not only with the first component of its own verse, but actually with the overall tone of the poem (excluding the other antitheses). The entire poem is built around a concept of strength, even violence sometimes, but in the last line, the idea of peace in introduced and forms a sharp contrast with that concept. In this way the structure of the poem supplements the overall idea of contradiction of what is expected not only by the mighty, but also of God, by a reversal (or change) in itself. One might expect that with all the emphasis on the power of the Lord, the concluding statement would be some warning of how the Lord will crush the mighty, but instead there is simply the quiet statement that "the Lord will bless his people with peace." This final reversal of emphasis illustrates the complexity and all pervasiveness of God to the Hebrew mind — a God pervasive enough to be contained in part in all of nature and complex enough to be gentle and peaceful while possessing unlimited power. Such a God might well be worth one's praise.

As Henry Van Dyke says, a sense of the presence of God in all nature and an intense joy in the knowledge of that presense is certainly a mark of much Hebrew poetry,[5] especially that dealing with nature. This mark is quite obvious in the twenty-ninth psalm, where the voice of the Lord and the wind can almost be identified as one and the same thing, in the third through the seventh (and perhaps the eighth) verses. Perhaps, as Van Dyke also says, this sense of the omnipresence of God is what swept Hebrew poetry naturally into greatness,[6] but there is also a great deal of artistry in the verse, which must be at least partially conscious, and without which the poetry would never attain the heights that it does. Whatever the case the poetry is magnificent, and in reading it one can realize, intellectually and emotionally, what the psalmist must have felt when watching "the voice of the Lord" move nature either violently or peacefully.

*—Greg Henry*

### NOTES

1. T. S. Eliot, in *Poetry: A Modern Guide To Its Understanding And Enjoyment,* by Elizabeth Drew (New York, 1959), p. 236.
2. Eliot, *Ibid.,* p. 237.
3. Eliot, *Ibid.,* p. 240.
4. Joseph Addison, in "The Poetry of the Psalms," by Henry Van Dyke, in *The Bible As Literature,* ed. R. G. Moulton, et al. (New York, 1896), p. 100.
5. Van Dyke, p. 100-2.
6. *Ibid.,* p. 100.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Drew, Elizabeth. *Poetry, A Modern Guide To Its Understanding And Enjoyment.* New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1959.
Moulton, R. G. *The Bible As Literature.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1896.

When the spirit moves you
move it back
You've got the right of way!

*—Woodie Stevens*